

Nº 5/2014

Transnational Lives

Mobility and Gender

TL
Network

TL Network e-Working Paper Series

Fathering and Conjuality in Transnational Patchwork Families: the Angola/Portugal case

Marzia Grassi and Jeanne Vivet

TL Network e-Working Papers
(ISSN 2182-5718)



Av^a Prof. Aníbal de Bettencourt, Nº9 1600-189 Lisboa, Portugal
Tel:351-21-7804700 Fax:351-21-7940274/e-mail: tlnetwork2010@gmail.com
URL: <http://www.tlnetwork.ics.ul.pt>

Abstract: This paper explores long-distance fatherhood and the father-child relationships in transnational families between Angola and Portugal. Using evidence for the Portugal/Angola case in the second work package of the TCRAf-Eu project, we discuss the division of parental duties based on established gender roles (mother as caregiver and father as bread-winner) and how they are reconstructed in the long-distance context in which there are very few mothers living abroad: in our sample, the overwhelming majority of parents living in Portugal with children in Angola are fathers. Relational reconfigurations induced by absence are not always expected or controlled as changing roles within the family. We argue that besides the economic situation, conjugality and family gendered dynamics are crucial to an understanding of long-distance fatherhood practices and the long-distance father/child relationship.

Key words: fatherhood, transnationalism, patchwork family, conjugality, gender.

Authors:

Marzia Grassi is a senior researcher fellow at Institute of Social Sciences - University of Lisbon in Portugal. Phd in Development Economics, Master in African Studies. Since 2013 Portuguese coordinator of the project GENDERCIT (FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IRSES/318960), funded by People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) – IRSES. Since 2012 P.I. of the project "Places and belongings: circular conjugalities between Angola and Portugal" (PTDC/AFR/119149/2010) on the emergence of new forms of conjugality among heterosexual couples living apart (one in Portugal, the other in Angola). Between 2009 and 2012 P.I. of the project "Transnational child-raising arrangements between Angola and Portugal". The project is part of the NORFACE funded European comparative project, *TCRAf-Eu: Effects of transnational child-raising arrangements (TCRAs) on the life-chances of children, migrant parents and caregivers between Africa and Europe*. Between 2008-2011 she was P.I. of the Project "Migratory Trajectories from Africa, Illegality and Gender (PIHM/GC/0046/2008 and ICS-UL/524/2008), which aimed to rethink the notion of illegal immigration in Portugal and Italy. She is author of several articles in international reviews, edited book and monographies, and the coordinator of the Transnational Lives, Mobility and Gender network.

Jeanne Vivet is a French geographer, lecturer and researcher at University Bordeaux 3 (Laboratory LAM "Les Afriques dans le monde"). PhD in geography by University of Paris Ouest Nanterre. Team member in the ongoing project "Places and belongings: circular conjugalities between Angola and Portugal" (PTDC/AFR/119149/2010), coordinated by Marzia Grassi at ICS-UL. Between 2010 and 2012, post-doc researcher in the project Transnational child-raising arrangements between Angola and Portugal, NORFACE funded European comparative project, TCRAf-Eu: Effects of transnational child-raising arrangements (TCRAs). Her main research interests are: City, urbanity, forced mobility, displaced persons, transnational families.

Introduction

This paper explores long-distance fatherhood and the father-child relationships in transnational families between Angola and Portugal. Using evidence for the Portugal/Angola case in the second work package of the TCRAf-Eu project¹, we discuss the division of parental duties based on established gender roles (mother as caregiver and father as breadwinner) and how they are reconstructed in the long-distance context in which there are very few mothers living abroad: in our sample, the overwhelming majority of parents living in Portugal with children in Angola are fathers. Relational reconfigurations induced by absence are not always expected or controlled as changing roles within the family (Marinho, 2010, Nobles, 1999, 2011). We argue that besides the economic situation, conjugality and family gendered dynamics are crucial to an understanding of long-distance fatherhood practices and the long-distance father/child relationship.

In the analysis of transnational families, there has been research on the separation between children and parents (Parrenas 2008; Suarez-Orozco, and Suarez-Orozco 2001), but fathers are often neglected. Researches on parenthood focused mostly on motherhood, and most of the authors in this area (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine, 1997; Parrenas, Salazar, 2001; Schmalzbauer, 2004; Zontini, 2004 and 2010; Tolstokorova, 2010) assume the primacy of the ethnocentric representations of gender roles inside the family.

The picture of the transnational Angolan families that emerges from the survey is particularly complex. Contrary to the picture of a family in which the “breadwinner” father working in a European country supports his wife and children (Barou, 2001), we find very few couples involved in Transnational Child-Raising Arrangements (TCRAs). On the contrary, we find high proportions of transnational families in which the father who migrated to Portugal has children in both Angola and Portugal, and is no longer in a relationship with the mother of the child in Angola. Most of them are involved in another relationship in Portugal and have children from this partner. In these cases there are consequences on transnational child care arrangements.

¹ This paper is based on quantitative data collected in the second work package of the Transnational Child-Raising Arrangements between Africa and Europe - TCRAf-Eu project - (interviews with 300 Angolan migrant parents living in Portugal- 150 are living in a transnational child raising arrangements and the other half are living in Portugal with their children), and in the first work package (2250 students interviewed in Angolan secondary schools – 260 of which having at least one parent living abroad). We used and crossed data from both work-package surveys. The analysis is based on descriptive statistics (on care giving arrangements, frequency of contacts, relationships with the children and the caregiver, remittances, feelings and emotional well-being, etc.) taking into account the family situation and the conjugality of the father-respondents,.

To look closer at transnational families dynamics we think it is crucial to understand the causes of migration in our migration flow, aside from the Angolan civil war (ended in 2002) and the post-colonial framework. We consider that the high proportion of migrant fathers and low proportion of migrant mothers can be related to gender established roles in the Angolan family and society. Gender established responsibilities, including the mothering and fathering representations in Angolan society (Grassi 1998) and among Angolan migrants are important for understanding transnational care arrangements and transnational families.

On the other hand, in Portugal, we witness a decline of the “father as breadwinner” role in the family as an emerging change that is much more prevalent in comparison to other European countries (Wall et al. 2010:40).

In this article, to understand how parents’ rights and responsibilities are negotiated in these transnational families and how gendered roles (mother as caregiver and father as breadwinner) are reconstructed (Grassi 2007), we go beyond the structure and agency factors. We emphasize the difficulty of capturing the social change at the level of the family or the household, as it is very problematic to identify the migrants’ households when one of the parents has a new conjugal and/or parental relationship (Akesson 2012).

More specifically, we will consider different dimensions; first the family and parents’ expectations in transnational Angolan families (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002), considering that expectations are not the same in a mother-migrant family as in a father-migrant one (Parreñas 2005). Secondly, we pay special attention to gender expectations. Indeed, gender expectations are socially constructed and sustained by socialization, interactional expectations, and institutional arrangements, and we must bear in mind that when individuals change socialization, the gender structure also changes (Risman 1999). Thirdly, considering that parental migration and parental conjugality are substantively distinct experiences (Nobles 2011), we must wonder if in our case conjugality is a crucial element for understanding the consequences of fatherhood at distance. In an insightful article, J. Nobles argues that non-resident father involvement with children is different if the separation occurs because of the parent’s separation or because of the migration. Can the same be said in our case study and can we capture such differences considering the circumstance of the existence of others’ experience of conjugalities in Angolan fathers of our sample?

We first review some literature on fatherhood and transnational families addressing how gender as a social structure affects individuals, organizes expectations attached to social positions, and becomes an integral part of social institutions. We then clarify the migration context of our flow between Angola and Portugal, the data collection methods, and their

epistemological consequences in our context. Finally, we present and discuss the forms taken by transnational families in our sample, introducing the notion of *patchwork families* to characterize them.

As the child and adolescent psychotherapist (Gestalt therapy) Marguerite Dunitz-Scheer (n.d: 2-5) recalls, the word “patchwork” designates carpets made up of different pieces of fabric. The term has been adapted to describe the reorganization of families, following a separation. Although this is a growing phenomenon in our western societies, it is not a new one and “patchwork families” indicates family systems coming together in ways that are not originally planned. In the transnational Angolan families included in our sample most of the migrant fathers have children from different partners. The complexity of these families, their specificities, and the longstanding relationship of sharing cultures and history between Portugal and Angola, point to the appropriateness of this term in referring to transnational Angolan families. The different “pieces of fabric” point to different ways, and periods, and circumstances in which people of these countries have been sharing values and negotiating complexity grounded in their common history. Our conclusion points to the emergence of a specific transnational family, a patchwork family, in which conjugality seems to be a crucial framework to understand parental relationships at a distance. Following a transnational approach, the gender structures and cultures of both Angolan and Portuguese societies must be considered in the understanding of family in this specific migratory context. Finally, we question if this specificity can also include the contemporary Angolan family if one member lives apart from her/his children but in the same country or city, as the context seems to suggest.

Fatherhood at distance and family roles

The term “parenthood” arose in the 1950s in the United States (Erikson 1950) in the context of the studies on severe psychiatric pathologies, “puerperal psychosis”, in order to emphasize that the concept of parenting refers to a complex process that involves conscious and unconscious levels of mental functioning. The term was not very common until the 1980s when many researchers started to study the process of transition toward parenting - mainly with regard to women. Only recently, and mostly in Western societies in the context of the juridical institutionalization of the parental responsibility in the case of separation or divorce of the parents, have there been studies on fatherhood.

When one of the parents is geographically separated from his/her children because of migration to another country or another city, it seems important to reflect on the difference between the subjective experience of parenthood, the exercise of parental power, and its practices.

According to Palkovitz, Marks, Appleby, and Holmes (2012), *“people who become parents and are involved in the raising of children are transformed and follow a different developmental trajectory from people who do not engage in parenting roles. Erikson (1950) suggested that positive adult development reflects care for the next generation, or “generativity,” and that parenthood is “the first, and for many, the prime generative encounter” (Erikson, 1964, p. 130).* More recently, parenthood has been described as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the achievement of generativity (Snarey, Son, Kuehne, Hauser, and Vaillant, 1987). At the same time, sociologists and psychologists have considered forms of child-rearing (Frankel, 1991) and the ways that these forms profoundly affect the lives of parents at many levels. Using ethnographic analysis, anthropologists reveal the subtle dynamics that shape childrens' socialization to advance understanding of how cultural ideologies guide mothers' behaviours, reconsidering existing developmental theory on discipline (see Heather Rae-Espinoza, 2010, on mothering, children, socialization, and practices in Ecuador).

In migration studies most authors have also focused on motherhood (see for example, Gervais, Cristine and Montigny, 2009; Battaglini, 2002). Transnational migration studies focus on the separation of children and parents (Parrenas 2008; Suarez-Orozco, and Suarez-Orozco 2001), but earlier research on parenthood is mostly focused on motherhood, . On the other hand, recent research on non-resident fathers and fathering at distance (Nobles, 2011 and Parrenas, 2008) also adress the father's role and involvement in the children's education. These studies reveal a growing interest in the father-focused perspective.

The first of the three axes of the concept of parenting (Erikson 1950) (exercise of parenthood; experience and practice) refers to the exercise of a right in its legal sense, a domain that transcends individual subjectivity and its behaviours. The rights and duties reside in each individual kinship tie. The definition of kinship exists in all societies precisely to individualize the organized groups to which each member belongs and by which he/she is governed by rules of transmission (p. 48). The rules (membership, alliance affiliation) imply rights and obligations and provide a social space in which each person may develop, but at the price of some constraint. In the structuralist perspective of Levi Strauss, the elementary structures of kinship in traditional societies determine marriage choices. In modern societies

legal aspects of kinship and affiliation determine the exercise of parenthood. It seems that we are witnessing a weakening of the evolution of symbolic legislation that loses its founding role to organize society.

Parenthood in Angolan society has a very strong symbolic weight for both women and men. This remains true even while recognizing that the father is not in a conjugal relationship with the child's mother, and lives in another place. However, this symbolic weight does not imply a genuine fatherhood experience in terms of practices, and to understand the emotional distress related to parents living at distance we have to consider this context. Other scholars working on parenting and care at distance believe that maintaining intimate relationships in transnational families depends on various care practices that involve the circulation of objects, values, and persons, and that care practices are structured by geographic distance, in which the distinction between overseas and overland separation is significant (Leifsen and Tymczuk, 2012). In this case, the most important difference can be the type of care that the transnational migrant male parent uses to cultivate the relationship(s) with children (care at distance moves through formal and less-formal market channels, such as international communication technologies, remittances companies, and transport facilitators, at least in the case of medium and high class families).

Taking into account the actual situation of the child and the family partners, as well as the symbolic dimension of parenting and affiliation to which the child adheres whenever there is failure on the part of parents, we can affirm that families continue to be the place of enrolment of the child in a genealogy and filiation, the place where identity is constructed, and the place of confrontation of differences arising from otherness gender and generation.

Looking to transnational families, and given the geographic separation between parents and children, we should consider that kinship in Angola and sub-Saharan Africa is not synonymous with consanguinity. Kinship in Angola reflects a broader concept than in Europe, and migrant parents have to negotiate their parental role considering that fatherhood and motherhood do not have the same meaning in Angola as in Portugal. This process of negotiation can be very hard to manage for migrants parenting from abroad in the new immigration flows in contemporary Europe.

Cultural expectations and gender issues: fatherhood in the Angola/Portugal context

Angolan fathers and mothers are active subjects and both identify challenges regarding the exercise of their parental roles. The roles of women and men are culturally expected and are constructed in both the society to which they migrate and in Angola. In this sense, transnational fathers who have their children cared for by their mothers in the country of origin, *“appear less focused on challenges related to the care of their children and problems back home, and were more focused on work and wages”* (Hernandez Avila 2008: 169).

Furthermore, as in other contexts studied by many authors, long separations between biological mothers or fathers and young children are socially constructed as a normal aspect of transnational lives: *“they are a painful necessity, but are not automatically assumed to be traumatic. In an ideal situation, when the mother is the migrant parent, the biological mother and the foster mother play complementary roles in what some authors describe as the transnational fostering triangle”* (Akesson et al. 2012). The parent–child separation in Angola is also socially accepted not only because of the common practice of children fostering but also because of the instability and family deconstruction caused by the long period of armed conflict (Nzatuzola, 2005). The organization and structure of families has been strongly disrupted by almost 30 years of war (1975-2002) and by recent and accelerated urbanization. Millions of Angolans had to flee their homes to avoid the effects of hostilities and generalized violence. Many women and children were left on their own as the male family members were recruited to the army. Estimates indicated that almost 42% of the Angolan population had been displaced by 2002. As a result, families and entire communities were disrupted. In urban areas around 14% of the children are not living with their biological parents, even though they are alive, and 19% live only with their mothers (INE, 2010). At the national scale, only 66% of children under the age of 17 are living with their biological parents.

Constructions of masculinity are fluid and changing and have to be renegotiated and redefined in transnational conjugal relationships. African sub-Saharan countries are specific in terms of gender role organization in the family and society (Grassi 2003). In African studies, patriarchalizing interpretations of African societies are common and gender power relations are often taken for granted. At the same time, hierarchies of age are often mentioned as being more important than hierarchies of gender. According to some authors, when the focus is on marriage, *“The woman of feminist theory is a wife”* (e.g., Oyéwùmi 2003). As this author stresses, the hierarchies of insiders / outsiders to given lineage are also often more

important than hierarchies of gender (the meaning of "wife" in the Youruba language and "Consanguinity" are more important than "conjugalit  ") (Arnfred 2005).

In the transnational approach of male studies between Africa and Europe, there is a lack of research on constructions of masculinity. Masculinity norms differ according to the contexts, depending on negotiations about those definitions between individuals or groups (Amadiume 1987). Looking at the changes inside the conjugal relationship helps to understand how the construction process of masculinity is renegotiated between men and women in a context of transnational migration and how the social reproduction "in motion" (Appadurai 1996, Koser 2002, Korac 2009) works in the context of our analysis.

There is no study on either gender-male dynamics in Angolan society or on the role of men in the family. Traditionally, women have the important role of ensuring food and household maintenance. Even if their access to the formal labour market is subordinate to that of men, in Angola, as in many parts of southern and central Africa, women have been independent in economic affairs, being active in the informal sector. There is no routine control between men and women, on how much and how they spend each others' earnings. Both participate, but differently, in managing the household. Throughout the West African coast there are many women working as traders (Grassi, 2010, Lopes 2006,). Their trading activity allows them to earn money outside the agriculture sector.

Many of the major ethnic groups in Angola are matrilineal groups (e.g., the Ambundo and Bakongos), and this influences gender relations because, in a matrilineal society (in which descent is traced through women) the woman holds a higher social status than in patrilineal societies.

The reproductive role of women in Angola, as in many other African countries, is dignified and culturally considered as the most important. In recent decades the importance of women's roles in the struggle for independence has been also recognized. The war, which resulted in the recruitment of an increasing number of men, led to the increasing access of women to positions of power in the urban sector.

Moreover, the traditional ways of life are based on kinship relationships, which determine the lifestyles, norms, and values passed down from generation to generation. Traditional values affect women, positively or negatively, about the possibility of participating actively in development. If, on the one hand, the woman is considered as the depository of the national culture and the soul of the reproduction, on the other hand, it is the same culture that often inhibits their full involvement in modern society.

An important cultural aspect of Angolan society is polygamy (marriage/relationship of a man with more than one partner). Socio-economic reasons usually lead a man to have more than one wife. In rural areas, the number of women determines the wealth of a man. Having more women corresponds to greater well-being. The same can be said for the number of children. In Angola there are more women than men, especially in rural areas, and as a result some women accept these situations as it is the only way for them to reach the socially accepted status of “married woman”. Having children confers an additional social status to women and thus many, even unmarried, have children. Having children is also very important for men, as it confers an important social status. In urban areas, instead of the traditional practice of polygamy, men often maintain several relationships with women living in different houses. This is a current phenomenon in the largest Angolan cities, such as Luanda, Benguela, and Huambo.

It is generally accepted that colonialism, forced displacements during the war, and accelerated urbanization strongly affected traditional values and caused changes in household lifestyles.

At the same time, women generally demonstrate submission, adopting attitudes that are expected of them, thereby bestowing upon themselves the image that they are socially adjusted. This submission is not driven by the same motivation for all women and seems to exist side by side with their spirit of independence in all the issues related to establishing the household. Women have respect for their traditions, which is internalized as inherent to the natural order of things. For example, when the man is absent from the household, women organize themselves and take on certain social behaviours and economic management of the household. These behaviours range from developing their work in the informal sector, establishing women’s associations, searching for modern financial integration, or even raising their level of training - all in search of economic independence and self-reliance. (Grassi 1998:87-90).

In the scope of the TCRA project, we gather data information on mothering and fathering representations and roles. We asked all of the interviewees their opinion about international migration of mothers and fathers. International mother migration is normally not well accepted, by either mothers or fathers, but more so by fathers. The overwhelming majority of men (more than 80%) responded that it is bad or very bad that mothers migrate abroad. Women’s responses are a bit more contrasted or nuanced, with larger proportions responding that it is neither bad nor good. On the contrary, the majority of the respondents indicated that

it is neither bad nor good that fathers migrate internationally, 30% reporting that it is bad or very bad and a considerable proportion of men responding that it is good or very good (more than 15%). Responses from students show the same overall results: mothers' migration is less well considered than fathers' migration, which is not very surprising given that mothers in the Angolan society are regarded as the most important caregivers – taking care of the children from birth, as they are expected to do. These results help us to understand the common cultural values linked to the international migration amongst Angolan migrants and the gender division of parenting and household responsibilities, at least in the opinions and responses of our interviewees.

Angolan immigration to Portugal: A post-colonial context

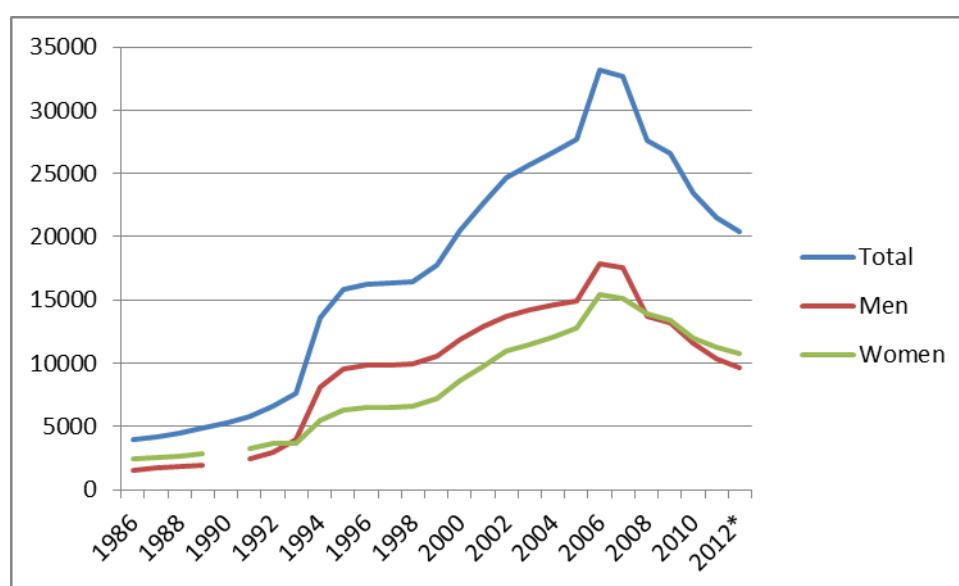
In Portugal, migrants coming from former Portuguese colonies accounted for 31% of the foreigners in 2007 (SEF, 2007). The intensification of migration from former African colonies started with Portugal's entry into the European Community in 1986, and was driven in large part by Portugal's increasing demand for labour linked with several infrastructure projects. It explains that an important proportion of Angolan migrants working in Portugal were employed in the civil construction sector.

Flows from Angola were not based on economic motivations alone, but were also motivated by the war. The most intensive period of Angolan migration is reported during the 1990s and early 2000, a result of continuing hostilities following the breakdown in the Bicesse and Lusaka peace processes. This is the general pattern that fits the migration of our respondents. The majority of them arrived between 1999 and 2001 (12 to 14 years ago) and only 12% ($n = 35$) are recent migrants, arriving during the last five years. They were still young adults when arriving in Portugal and they were admitted under tourist visas, most of them subsequently becoming permanent residents. The conflict in Angola had a major impact on emigration decisions, but it must not be seen as the single driver of emigration. The combination of violence, instability, limited labour and education opportunities, and the decline of living standards may have influenced the emigration choices. Cultural and linguistic proximity, family support, and the existence of social networks in Portugal (friends and relatives in Lisbon) made this country an attractive destination for many Angolans, even more so than the labour opportunities (IOM, 2009). Most of these migrants received some assistance from the members of their family or their social networks in Portugal. Some were

the children of the elite and middle classes, who fled compulsory military service and continued their education in Portugal, but the majority are unqualified immigrants and work in civil construction, cleaning, and other similar positions. The majority of the respondents continue to hold low-wage jobs in the services sector, at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy of the Portuguese labour market (cleaning services for women and construction for men). The household income of 75% of our target group is less than 1,000 Euros per month and 20% earn less than 500 Euros per month, with unemployment at 19% and youth unemployment at about 38% (Pordata 2012)

Most of the migrant fathers (70%) were already separated from their child's mother before leaving Angola, and the migration was thus not a couple's decision to improve the household conditions. This distinguishes our case study from others in which the migration was driven by the breadwinning role of the father. Most of the migrant fathers in our sample seem to have migrated for concerns about their academic training or because of the war, and this may explain why remittances are very low in our case.

FIGURE 1. Evolution of legally resident Angolans in Portugal by gender (1986-2012)



Source: updated from Grassi, 2010, INE and SEF (1986-2012).

*2012 provisional data

Although there used to be more Angolan men than women in Portugal, this trend has recently reversed. The share of female migrants amongst Angolan residents has been rising steadily. In 1999, 59% were men and 41% were women, but in 2010 there were more women than men registered (49% vs. 51%). (Figure 1). This evolution can be explained by the process of family reunification. According to a recent study from the OIM, the primary

reasons for emigration amongst women were to join a relative, search for new opportunities, and to study (2009: 49).

In the last decade we observe the decline of immigrants' numbers because of the economic recession.. Many foreign migrants have returned to their country or migrated to other European countries. Large proportions of Angolan migrants with poor qualifications faced difficult situations, characterized by precariousness and economic vulnerability. We will also consider this economic situation to explain and analyse the flow of remittances from Portugal to Angola, which are quite low.

SAMPLING STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

This article draws from the larger TCRA's project, which analyses forms of relationships between fathers and children in transnational families between Angola and Portugal. Our reflections are mostly grounded on data collected from the two surveys of the TCRA project mentioned above. Data coming from the parents' survey allow us to define some specificity of Angolan transnational families, independently of the country of immigration.

We interviewed 300 Angolan migrant parents living in Greater Lisbon. The sampling strategy was designed to interview three categories of migrants to be compared:

- Parents with all children living in Angola (23%, n= 68), called "full TCRA",
- Parents with children living in Portugal and Angola (25.% n= 76), designated "mixed TCRA"
- and parents with all children living in Portugal (52%, n= 152): as our control group

Whatever TCRA situation we are considering, 80% of the interviewees are men and an overwhelming majority of the caregivers in Angola are the children's mothers, who are separated from the migrant father. Furthermore, we stress that the transnational care arrangements in our case are not recent, since the migration duration is around 10 years. We say that it is not a new care arrangement as the vast majority of children were younger than 10 years old when their mother or father migrated to another country. A large proportion of parents have been away for a long period (more than 11 years), especially fathers (40%). *In addition to that*, most of the children whose father is away are living with their mother in Angola (75%, n=161) and for a large majority (70%, n=144) their parents are no longer in a relationship.

Besides the data from the migrant parent's survey we refer in this paper to data from the children's survey. In this case we distinguish fathers absent nationally and fathers absent internationally. In the children's survey, 2250 children in secondary schools in Luanda, Benguela, and Lobito were interviewed, 260 children having at least one parent abroad. Considering the gender balance, we can confirm that an overwhelming majority of the migrant parents living abroad are also men, and few students have their mother living abroad. We can also emphasize the importance of Portugal as a destination country (28%), and Europe in general (60%). African countries (Namibia, SA, RDC) represent about 28%.

Fatherhood in Angolan transnational patchwork families

Looking inside parenting roles from the perspective of children and parents we can find not only differences between mixed and full-TCRAs but also interesting gender differences.

As mentioned above, 80% of our interviewees in a TCRA situation are men and an overwhelming majority of the caregivers in Angola are the children's mothers, who are separated from the migrant father. Many families in our sample have the form of what we call in this paper *patchwork families*. Because 94% of the TCRA fathers (full or mix) are separated from the mother living in Angola and 70% have been separated before the migration. TCRA fathers have 2.8 children on average, 82% have children from different partners and one third of their current partners have children from another relationship.

When we asked the fathers about the quality, nature, and frequency of the relationship with their children to understand the extent to which fathers can be regarded as long-distance caregivers we found different forms according to the social category of the family. When we asked them about their financial contribution to the children's upbringing we unlighted their role as long-distance breadwinners but what kind of emotional proximity is possible in such case? Let see finally something about the transnational emotional challenges for fathers and children.

Ways not to lose contact

Communication across long distances is a defining element in the everyday practices of transnational fatherhood. As Carling et al. (2012) show, in a sense these practices are shaped by the intersection of technological, economic, and psychological factors. To what extent and

in what ways do migrant parents remain connected to their children while abroad? There are different types of situations, with some parents maintaining closer contacts with their children than do others. Most parents say that they are the ones to initiate the contact with their children, and this is especially evident for full-TCRAs fathers (96% and mixed-TCRAs: 88%). When fathers do not take the initiative to contact children, it is the caregiver that takes on that responsibility, and there are no differences between mixed- (4.4%) and full-TCRAs (4.3%).

Generally, both children and fathers consider the frequency of contact to be rather low. Concerning the fathers' perspective, this was the case for both mixed- and full-TCRAs. Interestingly, gender differences emerged showing that mothers characterize the contact with their children as more frequent compared to fathers. As to the question of whether parents can be regarded as long-distance caregivers, the results suggest that they can be, especially mothers and migrant fathers who do not have children living with them in Portugal. Landline or mobile phones are used to stay in touch (results showing that the majority of children use their mobile phone to stay in touch with the father, regardless of whether the father is absent nationally or internationally). However, children with the father absent internationally are more likely to use a landline phone or e-mail compared to children with their father absent nationally. When fathers are asked about what means they use to stay in touch with their children, the majority report using the mobile phone and about one third say they use a landline phone.

Younger children have more contact with their father compared to older ones: 43% of those younger than 14 years-old report several contacts in a week, while this is true for only 28% aged between 15 and 17. The percentage of those with "no contact" is greatest for the oldest (36. % for those older than 18 years, and 24.% for those younger). Thirty-five percent of the children younger than 14 years old report having always had a warm and open relationship with their non-resident father, and this percentage falls to 32% for those above 18 years old. Differently, older children are more likely to have had a distant relationship with their non-resident father than are the younger children.

Regarding children, the results show that those with their fathers absent nationally or internationally consider that their contact with the father was fairly sporadic over the past month. However, when children were asked to think about the last time they had seen their father, a considerable difference emerged between the two kinds of geographic separations: when the separation was within the country children said they saw their father more often compared to when the father was away in a different country.

As for fathers, these often reported that they had not seen their children living in Angola in the last month, and this was the case for fathers both with and without children living in Portugal. Similar results were also found when fathers were asked about the last time they saw their child in person. As for gender differences, it is interesting to note that compared to fathers, both mixed- and full-TCRA mothers reported relatively more contact with their children living in Angola

As for what fathers talk about with their children, mixed-TCRAs say that they talk about school (80%), other subjects (7%), health (6%), money/gifts (4%), and family (3%), while full-TCRAs say that they talk about school (53%), family (21%), health (11%), money/gifts (11%), and presents (4%). It therefore seems that mixed-TCRAs invest less in subjects related to the family compared to full-TCRAs. Finally, the large majority of parents say that they are the ones to initiate the contact with their children, and this is especially evident for full-TCRAs father (96%; mixed-TCRAs: 88%). When fathers do not take the initiative to contact children, it is the caregiver that does, and there are no differences between mixed and full-TCRAs.

According to Parreñas, distance in time and space between migrant parent and their children weakens intergenerational relationships by losing the day-to-day life (2005: 67). If we focus on the relationship between TCRA children and fathers as perceived by children and fathers, our data suggest that, overall, children living in Angola and migrant fathers see their relationship as positive. In the fathers' perspective, this is especially evident for those who do not have children living with them in Portugal (n= 50). Fathers with children living both in Portugal and Angola evaluated the relationship with children living in Angola less positively compared to full-TCRA fathers. Mixed-TCRA fathers rated more positively the relationship with children living in the same house compared to the relationship with children living in Portugal in a different house or in Angola). This shows us that distance impacts negatively the relationship with their children regardless of the geographic distance. Fathers do not have a better relationship with their children who are living in another house because of a separation with the mother, and we can suppose that this may be linked to a tense or more difficult relationship with the other progenitor.

The results also reveal gender differences, showing that mothers living abroad look at their relationship with children as more positive compared to fathers, and this is evident for both mixed and full-TCRAs. Fathers who also have children in Portugal (from another partner) seem to invest less in subjects related to the family, and although they take the initiative to

contact their children, they call their children less often than fathers whose children are all living in Angola.

Breadwinner fathers?

A related question concerns the extent to which fathers are breadwinners by contributing financially with money or goods to the upbringing of their children living in Angola. To what extent can migrant fathers be regarded as long-distance caregivers?

As mentioned above, contrary to the picture of a transnational family with the “breadwinner” father working in a Western country to support his wife and children (Barou, 2001, Bash, 1994), there are very few couples involved in TCRA. On the contrary, there are many families in which the father migrated to Portugal, has children in both Angola and Portugal, and is no longer in a relationship with the mother of his first child. Most of these are involved in another relationship in Portugal, even if a considerable proportion (38%) of the full TCRA are single. Mixed TCRA fathers usually have other children from this partner, which has consequences on transnational child care arrangements.

In our context, if we consider both the war as an important motivation to migrate, and the fact that the fathers were already separated from the mother’s child, we can assume that their migration was not motivated by the single factor of wishing to sustain their family. Moreover, the breadwinner role attributed to the father is easily challenged by the fact of the contemporary economic crisis in Portugal.

The responses from children indicate that approximately 5 out of 10 fathers send their children goods or money, and for those that do send something, they do this several times a year. No differences were found between whether the father was absent nationally or internationally, and the majority of fathers reported that it was the caregiver (and not the child) who received the money or goods that were sent.

The results from the children’s survey disagree somewhat, indicating that 8 out of 10 fathers say they send their children goods or money. Notably, these figures are a bit lower for fathers that have children also in Portugal, and it is also for them that the differences with mothers in a similar condition become more evident. In sum, the results suggest that fathers help the caregivers sporadically; but they do not send money monthly, but help the mothers to

pay special expenses or send a present for Christmas or birthday. In all cases, caregivers cannot count on regular help, and it seems that mothers pay for most of the expenses. The results suggest that some fathers can be, to some extent, regarded as long distance breadwinners.

In our sample, around 20% of TCRA fathers are unemployed. This high rate reflects the current economic recession in Portugal, growing poverty, and the crisis in the construction industry, in which many Angolans were working (Pereira, Vasconcelos 2007; Pereira, 2010). More than half think it is likely that they will be unemployed in the next year and the majority consider that they have insufficient money for their daily expenses.

For those reporting that they do send goods or money, in line with children's answers, they reported to doing this several times per year. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this was more evident for full-TCRAs. For these issues no gender differences are detected.

Sending or not sending remittances is not necessarily related with the working situation in the host country of the migrant father. As Pribilsky (2004) shows in the case of Ecuadorians in New York city, the construction of masculinity also depends on new ways to balance the constitution of the expected masculinity and the use of money: looking for a balance between consumption and their gender identities. In this space, the model of fatherhood shapes new forms of the breadwinner role. In our case study, migrants' masculinity seems to be constructed more by conjugal relationship than by fatherhood, even if the symbolic weight of having children is very important for migrant fathers. The role as breadwinner is not so important to affirm masculinity (Grassi 2007).

For the mother and children in Angola, migrant fathers in Portugal transmit affectivity as well as instrumental purposes by purchasing gifts for the children and family left behind (Pribilsky 2004: 340-341). This is the expected way to make sense of the newly imposed role as father breadwinner according to the European expected roles in a family.

Feelings about living apart (fathers and children)

We query children and fathers about their feelings about living apart and what they would like to do. Both migrant parent and children related a sense of discomfort and emotional distance toward their father/child. These statistics show us that fathers whose children are all living in Angola are more emotionally engaged and more in contact with them than fathers who also have children in Portugal. We specify here (as above) that these children living with them in Portugal are from another partner.

Most children feel sad (approximately 6 out of 10). When the father is absent internationally 4 out of 10 report that they would like him to come back, and 2 out of 10 say that they would like to leave the country and join him.

For full-TCRA father, the results replicate those of children regarding their feelings toward the separation, while for mixed-TCRAs a different picture emerges. For the latter, the percentage of those that feel sad is substantially lower (1 out of 3). These results provide a hint about what fathers would like to do about living apart from their children. While for full-TCRAs the majority would like the child to come and live with the parent in Portugal (and no significant differences amongst mothers were found), for mixed-TCRAs “only” 3 out of 10 would like their children to come and live with them, in clear contrast with what mothers said, where 8 out of 10 would like to reunite with their children in Portugal.

This addresses the issue of how children and fathers feel about living apart and what they would like to do in that regard, namely to what extent they would like to reunite with each other. Overall the results suggest that both children and parents feel sad about living apart. However, there are some differences. The vast majority of children feel sad for not living with their father, and this is the case regardless of the father being away in the same or in a different country. The second most chosen response option is that they feel nothing, followed by the option that they have mixed feelings, that is, that they feel both sad and happy. As for the fathers, the results seem to depend on whether they have children living in both Portugal and Angola or only children living in Angola. Fathers with children in both countries are almost evenly split between feeling sad, neutral, or feeling that being apart is the best solution. On the other hand, the majority of fathers with children only in Angola feel sad or neutral with a minority expressing that they feel that the arrangement is the best option.

A question that emerges from these findings is “why do fathers having children in both Portugal and Angola seem to be more distant from their children living in Angola, in terms of both the father’s role as caregiver and breadwinner, and their motivation to reunite with the children?”

It seems that there are strong differences between mother-absent and father-absent transnational families’ emotional wellbeing. When the mother migrates children complain more frequently about feelings of abandonment. At the same time and in our case study there are migrant fathers who frequently complain about the lack of day-to-day life with their children.

Conclusion

The migratory process is not neutral, but highly “gendered”, meaning that gender constitutes a core organizational principle for social relationships. Migrant experiences in destination countries also derive from differentiation revolving around the gender function, producing differing propensities to migration as well as different results between men and women. The majority of studies on migrations and development seem to reflect the conceptual point of view that attributes to women the status of subject following male patterns of behaviour (Carling and Akesson 2009:4). Asymmetries in power between men and women produce differences in the organization of migrant lives and permeate through social institutions, the family, economy, and politics. Studies on migrant women from PALOP countries carried out thus far in Portugal (Grassi 2003, Wall and São José 2004; Hellerman, 2005; Grassi and Evora, 2007) have found that women bring with them the responsibility – with which they self-identify – for maintaining bonds with the country of origin, influencing the ways in which they process their social relationships in Portugal and in the country of origin. Engendering development processes requires more than a focus on women. The origins of migration lie in an experience which in the majority of cases emerges out the developmental level of the country as well as the family history context. Correspondingly, there are increasing numbers of women and men deciding to emigrate alone but who rarely depart without first gaining the consent of the conjugal partner that they leave behind. In their memories and wishes, such feelings remain present – to a greater or lesser extent depending on the reproductive role that the respective culture attributes to women – in the life plan of the person left behind.

Men and women are capable of changing gendered ways of being throughout their lives. In the analysis of transnational families in the Angolan/Portuguese context we find that gender expectations can be overcome if couples are willing to flout society in its gender representations. In the end, however, both caregiver and breadwinner roles become the mother’s responsibility.

Every society has a gender structure and according to authors such as Risman Most children of traditional and modern families “*adopt their parents’ beliefs about gender, but they do struggle with the contradictions between parental ideology and knowledge and expectations in peer relationships*” (Risman 1999).

Are children in patchwork families at higher risk for their well-being, education, and happiness? We stress that it is very important to ask this question. In our migratory context

we can say that our data and their analysis are insufficient to conclude if these family systems produce more specific disorders compared to families in which children grow up in the presence of the two biological parents. We are certainly looking at particular forms of families in which the risk of conflicts arising from the organization of caring at a distance seems more related with the established gender and conjugal role in parenthood practices in the society of origin, Angola in this case. But other circumstances are also central, including the migrant parent's migratory condition and legality in the host country (see Grassi 2012).

Bibliografia

Åkesson, L., Carling, J., and Drotbohm, H. (2012). Mobility, Moralities and Motherhood: Navigating the Contingencies of Cape Verdean Lives. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(2), 237–260. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2012.646420

Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. Zed Books. Obtido de <http://www.amazon.com/books/dp/0862325951>

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Dimensões Culturais da Globalização*. Editorial Teorema. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/81573003/Dimensoes-Culturais-da-Globalizacao->

Arnfred, S. (2011). *Sexuality and Gender Politics in Mozambique: Rethinking Gender in Africa*. James Currey. Obtido de <http://www.amazon.com/Sexuality-Gender-Politics-Mozambique-Rethinking/dp/1847010350>

Barou, J. (2001). La famille à distance. Nouvelles stratégies familiales chez les immigrants d'Afrique sahélo-saharienne. *Hommes et migrations*, (1232), pp. 16–25.

Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., and Szanton B.C. (1994) *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-states*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers. <http://www.google.com/books?id=ffUbdxnzZjYC&lpg=PP8&ots=iSEYIvdOyh&dq=nations%20unbound%20transnational%20projects%20post%20colonial%20predicaments&lr=&hl=pt-PT&pg=PP8#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

Battaglini, A. (2002). Migration et paternité ou réinventer la paternité. *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, 15(1), pp. 165–179.

Bryceson and Vuorela 2002 Bryceson, D. F., and Vuorela, U. (2002). *The Transnational Family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks*. Oxford: Berg. Obtido de <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=102287033>

Carling 2005:4 Carling, J., and Åkesson, L. (2009). Mobility at the Heart of a Nation: Patterns and Meanings of Cape Verdean Migration. *International Migration*, 47(3), 123–155. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00526.x

Erikson, E.H. (1950). *Childhood and Society*. New York:Norton.

Erikson, E.H. (1964) *Identity, Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

Esben Leifsen and Alexander Tymczuk, (2012) “Care at a Distance: Ukrainian and ecuadorian Transnational Parenthood from Spain” *Journal of Ethnic and migration Studies*, Volume 38, Number 2, 1 February 2012, pp. 219-236(18)

Frankel, A. F. (1991) "Measuring International Capital Mobility: A Review" *Economics Bulletin*, Vol. 32 No. 2 pp. 1361-1368

Grassi, M. (1998) "O papel da mulher empresária angolana no desenvolvimento do país: empresárias de Luanda e Benguela" in *Economia Global e Gestão*, INDEG/ISCTE, Lisbon.
Grassi, M. (2003) "*Rabidantes: comércio espontaneo transnacional in Cabo Verde*" ICS/Spleen, Lisbon and Praia.

Grassi, M. (2007) "*Género e Migrações Cabo-verdianas*", Marzia Grassi e Iolanda Évora (eds.) Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, Lisbon.

Grassi, M. (2010) *Forms of Familial, Economic, and Political Association in Angola Today: A Foundational Sociology of an African State*, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York, London.

Grassi, M. (2014) “Mobility, Family, and Gender: a transnational approach “ in *JETT (Journal of educational teacher training)* Granada, Spain.

Heather Rae-Espinosa, (2010) Consent and Discipline in Ecuador: How to Avoid Raising an Antisocial Child *Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology* Volume 38, Issue 4, pages 369–387, December 2010

Hellerman, C. (2005). Migração de Leste: mulheres “sozinhas”. In *Imigração e Etnicidade: Vivências e Trajectórias de Mulheres em Portugal*. Lisbon, SOS Racismo.

Hernandez A. (2008) Migration: Health Challenges in Mexico, *Gobierno Federal*, Estados Unidos del Mexico

- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. and Ernestine, A. (1997) "I'm Here, but I'm There": The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood. *Gender and Society* 11: 5, 548-571. doi: 10.1177/089124397011005003
- IOM. (2009). "Setting the stage for enhanced development impacts of remittances in Angola." *IAECAE/MIREX, IOM Lisbon, IOM Luanda, IOM Pretoria and Development Workshop*.
- Korac Sanderson, M. (2009) Policy, agency, and intercultural dialogue: Experiences of refugees from war-torn Yugoslavia in Italy', in *Mondi Migranti* Issue no. 3, November-December
- Koser, K (2002) New Approaches to Asylum? *International Migration* Volume 39, Issue 6, pages 85–102
- Lopes, C. M. (2006) "Candongueiros, Kinguilas, Roboteiros e Zungueiros: uma digressão pela economia informal de Luanda" *Lusotopie*, XIII (1), pp.163-183
- Marinho, S. P. (2010). Ser pai na residência alternada: dinâmicas, trajectos e contextos da paternidade. In Wall, K, Aboim, S. and Cunha, V. (Eds.), *A vida familiar no masculino. Negociando velhas e novas masculinidades* (pp. 335-395). Lisboa: Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego
- Nobles, J. (2011). Parenting from abroad: Migration, nonresident father involvement, and children's education in Mexico. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73, 729-746. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00842.x
- Nzatuzola J. B. L. (2005) Gender and Family life in Angola *African Sociological Review*, 9, (2), 2005, pp.106-133
- Oyéwúmi O. (2003) *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press;
- Parreñas R. S. (2005) *Children of Global Migration Transnational Families and Gendered Woes* Stanford University Press, California.
- Parreñas, R.S. (2008). Transnational Fathering: Gendered Conflicts, Distant Disciplining, and Emotional Gaps. *Journal of Ethnic and Minority Studies*, Special Issue on Transnational Migration, 34:7, 1057-72. doi: 10.1080/13691830802230356

- Parreñas, R.S. (2001). Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families. *Feminist Studies* 27:2, 361-90. doi:10.2307/3178765
- Pereira, S. (2010). *Trabalhadores de origem africana em Portugal: Impacto das novas vagas de imigração*. Lisbon.
- Pereira, S. and J. Vasconcelos, J. (2007). *Combate ao Tráfico de Seres Humanos e Trabalho Forçado: Estudos de Caso e Respostas de Portugal*. Genebra: Organização Internacional do Trabalho (OIT).
- Pordata (2012) -Contemporary Portugal Database - <http://www.pordata.pt/en/Home>
- Pribilsky J. (2004) “Aprendemos a convivir: Conjugal relations, co-parenting, and family life among ecuadorian transnational migrants in New York city and the ecuadorian Andes” *Global Network* 4(3): 313-34.
- Schmalzbauer, L. (2004). Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The Case of Honduran Transnational Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 1317-1331. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00095.x
- Snarey, J., Son, L. Kuehne, L. Hauser, S. and Vaillant, G. (1987) The role of parenting in male psychological development *Developmental Psychology* 23, 593-603.
- Suárez-Orozco, C. and Suárez-Orozco, M.M. (2001). *Children of Immigration (Developing Child)*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Tolstokorova, A. (2010). Where Have All the Mothers Gone? The Gendered Effect of Labour Migration and Transnationalism on the Institution of Parenthood in Ukraine. *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, special issue on gendered migrations, 28:1, 184-214. Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aeer/article/view/660/753>
- Wall, K., José, S. J. (2004). Managing Work and Care: A Difficult Challenge for Immigrant Families. *Social Policy & Administration* Vol. 38, 6, 591-621.
- Yepez, I. (2011). “Si tu veux que je reste ici, il faut que tu t'occupes de nos enfants !” Migration et maternité transnationale entre Cochabamba (Bolivie) et Bergame (Italie). *Autrepart*, 1: 57-58, 199-213. doi:10.3917/autr.057.0199.

Zontini, E. (2004). Immigrant women in Barcelona: coping with the consequences of transnational lives. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 30: 6, 1113-1144. doi:10.1080/1369183042000286278

Zontini, E. (2010). *Transnational Families, Migration And Gender: Moroccan And Filipino Women In Bologna And Barcelona*. New York: Berghahn.